

HOW TO MANAGE A VT DEPARTMENT • BY TONI BRISTOL

No matter how many therapists you have – your first one, or ten or more therapists – if you don't manage them correctly you will lose them, plain and simple.

The best approach is:

1. Maintain an ACTIVE interest in what your therapists are doing - ALWAYS! Even if they have been with you for 10-20 years. That doesn't mean you have to be in the therapy room, but it does mean you need to meet weekly and get an update on what is happening.
2. Ensure your therapists are trained correctly (this was a subject of an earlier article, if you would like more information on this, please let me know).
3. Continually teach them new things once they have mastered what they have already been taught.
4. Discuss cases with them on a regular basis. It doesn't have to

be all the cases. Pick key cases which are of interest.

5. Ensure your therapists have sufficient time to study the patient file before they see the patient. This way if they have any questions they can get them answered beforehand.
6. ASK them what cases they have questions on, are curious about, are unsure of, or which they feel are not progressing at the rate they think they should.
7. Make sure they have the opportunity to practice any procedures or activities which they are unsure of. Have them do the procedure or activity on you (or on one of the other staff, with you observing).
8. Have them share patient successes in your general staff meeting. The rest of the staff needs to know what excellent results are being achieved.
9. Ensure that there is good coordination and communication

between yourself and all of the staff, as well as between the primary care staff and the VT staff. If there is any problem, resolve it quickly.

10. Most importantly, let them share in your dream and know that they are helping make it become a reality. Have them make it their dream too. Make sure they see the success stories, and hear the accolades. Just as this keeps you fired up, it has the same effect on them.

Most of these steps can be done on a weekly basis in a special VT Department staff meeting. This would be held in addition to the general staff meeting. If you are thinking that you don't have the time, please think again. When you have staff you need to empower them to do their jobs well. This doesn't happen by itself. The time you invest in your staff will pay big dividends.

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COVD IS GOING GREEN!

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Many associations have stopped printing meeting preliminary and final programs. While COVD will print the programs this year, the board is considering going to an online version

of all materials for 2009. Those wishing to have a printed copy could print any materials from the online version or would be able to request a print version.

The COVD Membership Directory and Desk Reference went green last year. We posted the directory online and made it available in print by request. This initiative was well received and only 25 print directories were requested.

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